

# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS



MAKERS OF  
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HISTORY  
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**The Landing of Columbus at San Salvador**

(October 12, 1492)



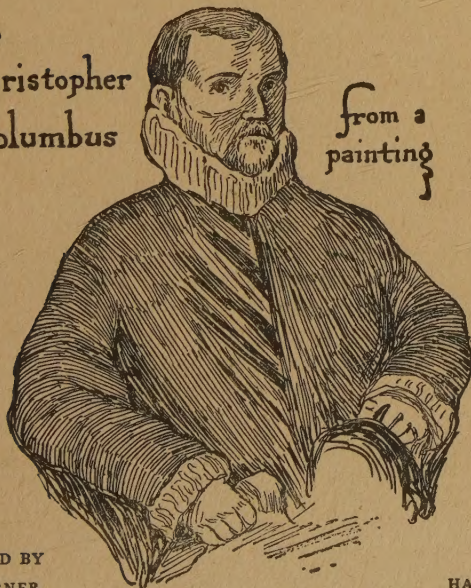
"MAKERS OF AMERICAN HISTORY" SERIES

# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

By CALISTA MCCABE COURTENAY

Christopher  
Columbus

from a  
painting }



ILLUSTRATED BY  
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AND  
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CHICAGO NEW YORK

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## CHAPTER I



Watching the ships come in—

EARLY LIFE—IDEA OF WESTERN PASSAGE TO ASIA—  
APPLICATIONS TO PORTUGAL AND SPAIN—1445-1492

**A**BOUT the year 1445, a little boy was born in Italy, in or near the city of Genoa. His name was Christopher Columbus. (There is much uncertainty regarding the date, which has been variously given as 1435, 1436, 1445 and 1446.)

Little is known of his boyhood, excepting that he and his two younger brothers, Bartholomew and Diego, watched the ships sail in and out of the harbor and heard the captains and the sailors tell wonderful stories of adventure.



In those days, very little was known about the earth. Traveling was so difficult that the Known World was a very small part of the Real World. Men knew nothing of the powers of steam and electricity and gas, which now carry them swiftly about by land and sea and air.

It was thought the earth was flat, that one who traveled too far would fall over the edge, and that the unknown places were full of terrible monsters. The ships were small and frail—driven by oars and sails. It needed a stout heart to sail away upon the stormy sea in such a vessel and particularly to go farther than any one had ever ventured before.

Christopher Columbus was a brave boy and, as he grew older, made up his mind to sail the seas on voyages of discovery.

His father was a wool-comber and had some means. So he sent Christopher to what was then an important school of learning in Pavia (Italy), where he studied, among other things, astronomy (which treats of the sun, the moon, the stars and the heavens), geography and navigation.

When Columbus was fourteen, he became a sailor. From time to time, he traveled over a large part of

the known world and brought his ships safely through many a furious battle with storms or foes. In those days, there was constant danger from pirates and frequent wars with different countries.

A great man, Prince Henry, was then living in Portugal. To increase knowledge of the earth and to carry religion and commerce to unknown lands, seemed to him work fit for a prince. So he left the pleasures of the King's court to live in a quiet place near the sea. He talked with learned men, who could help him in his plans. He hoped to prove that it was possible to sail around the continent of Africa to the rich cities and islands of Asia, where silks and jewels, spices and perfumes, could be bought. Year after year, he sent men down the western coast of Africa. Each time they returned, after exploring a little more of the unknown seas and shores.

The fame of these Portuguese discoveries reached the ears of Columbus. He longed to visit Portugal and at last his wish came true in a strange way. There is a thrilling story which tells how, in 1470, he was shipwrecked after a great battle with Venetian galleys off the coast of Portugal, saving his life by swimming to shore at Lisbon.

Here he found many people interested in exploring the earth. He heard tales of magical islands lying afar in the unknown western ocean, which no



Columbus swam to shore at Lisbon

one had ever seen. He talked with men who had made famous voyages and were planning new discoveries, and on some of these trips he sailed along.

In Lisbon, Columbus married Felippa Palestrello (sometimes written Perestrello), daughter of a noted captain in the service of Prince Henry. They had a little son named Diego. When not at sea, Columbus supported his family by making maps and charts; but his income was very small. All of his spare time was spent in the study of geography. The more he studied and talked with mariners, the more inter-



ested he became in learning the secrets of the earth.

Prince Henry's hope was to find a way around the continent of Africa to the far lands of the East. A new plan to reach these lands slowly formed in the mind of Columbus. Taking all the facts he had read about the earth and the stars, he worked out a theory of world exploration different from any yet thought of. He believed that the earth was round and that India stretched far east; hence, he concluded it could be reached by a short voyage westward.

We must remember that Columbus knew very little about Asia. A few travelers had visited some of its countries and written wonderful accounts of what they saw, but no one knew how far they lay eastward. It has required the combined knowledge of thousands of people, through hundreds of years—each one finding out a little—to give us our great and splendid store of knowledge.

At that time, no one knew anything of the size of the earth or the vastness of the oceans. Columbus thought the earth was much smaller than it really is, and neither he nor any other man dreamed of our great western continent, nor of the mighty Pacific Ocean. Though Columbus felt quite sure that the

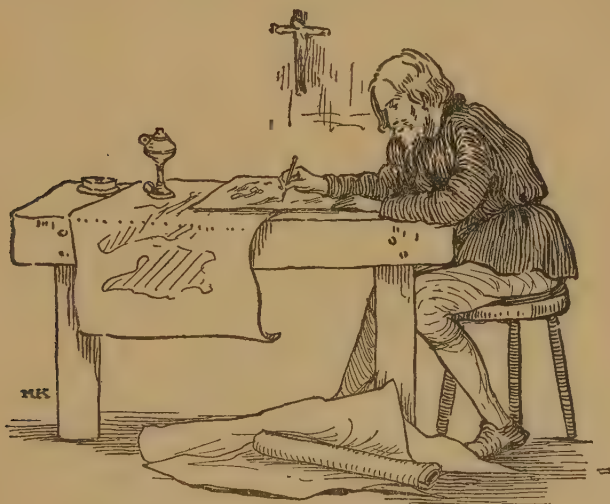
earth was round, he could not be sure that his ships would not have to sail uphill and that, on the other side, he would not find things upside down. For the great laws of nature by which we are all held safe to the earth, wherever we may be, had not yet been discovered. The only way to overcome this ignorance was to push bravely forward into the unknown and see what could be found. We must never forget how much we owe to the bravery of men who led the way to knowledge.

When the idea of sailing west became fixed in the mind of Columbus, his life of greatness began. He was to learn great patience and suffer great hardship, to win great success and render great service.

The lesson in patience began at once, for it was one thing for him to believe but quite another to win over any but a few learned men to his idea about the western route to Asia. He was only a poor map-maker and mariner. He had no money to hire men and ships to prove his statements. Indeed, such an enterprise was too big for private undertaking and permission had to be obtained from the government.

About the year 1482 or 1483, Columbus laid his plan before John II, King of Portugal. The King

was greatly interested in discoveries and was pleased with the idea. But, on talking the matter over with his counselors, who did not look upon it with favor, he was persuaded to refuse Columbus any help. Then King John did a most unworthy thing—he secretly sent out a ship to test the truth of Columbus's



Columbus working out his theory

theory. After a short absence, however, the captain and his men returned, refusing to venture farther and laughing at Columbus as a foolish dreamer.

Grieved by this deceit and feeling it was useless to expect any assistance in Portugal, Columbus left Lisbon in 1484 to seek help in other lands. His idea



was too great to be given up because of discouragements, disappointments and personal suffering. By this time, his wife was dead and he was very, very poor.

With his son Diego, he applied at Genoa and Venice, but both governments declined his proposals. It seems strange to us now that, for several years, Columbus wandered from court to court, begging kings to give him a chance to discover a world for them! Even Columbus himself did not then foresee the full result of his enterprise, for he thought only of a short way to India.

At last he went to Spain and tried to interest certain rich nobles. They treated him kindly and all agreed that if his plan should succeed, it would mean splendid riches and honor. But if it failed, it would mean a heavy loss. No one was willing to take the risk.

Columbus decided to go to the King of France. But his friend, the Duke of Medina Celi, sorry to see him leave Spain, wrote a letter to the Queen. He told her about the wonderful idea of Columbus and she asked that he be sent to her at Cordova, where the court then was.

At this time, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, rulers of Spain, were busy with their armies driving out the Moors, who had invaded their kingdom. Columbus was kindly received; but months passed before the King and Queen had time to hear his request. This delay gave Columbus opportunities to explain his theory to men of influence at the court. His knowledge and his own great thoughts, as well as his pleasing manners and appearance, made him an interesting companion. He was sincere and earnest and deeply religious.

Columbus made many friends in Cordova and here he met Beatrix Enriquez, whom he married, and who was the mother of his second son, Fernando, born in 1487.

At length, one of his friends, Cardinal Mendoza, brought him before the King. After hearing his reasons, Ferdinand called a council of the greatest scholars, astronomers and geographers. This was in the year 1486 and the court was then held in Salamanca, the great seat of learning in Spain. There Columbus was asked to explain his theory to the council. They looked upon him as a poor and unknown mariner. But Columbus's mind was full of

a great idea and that gave him courage and skill to answer all their questions. It was a hard test for Columbus. Some of the councilors regarded it as a dream too good to be true, others were not interested and some even thought he was insane.

Months and years passed while Columbus waited for this council to report to the King. At last they sent word, advising him to refuse the request. However, having won the confidence of a few of the wisest men at court, Columbus was not altogether refused. The King put him off until the war should be over.

This was a great disappointment to him. Still he did not lose faith in his plan nor give up hope of realizing it. He decided to leave Spain, as he had Portugal (the two greatest sea powers in the world at that time), and go to the King of France.

Passing through Palos, in southern Spain, Columbus stopped at the Convent of La Rabida, and asked for bread and water for his little son Diego. The kind-hearted prior, Juan Perez de Marchena, became greatly interested in what Columbus told him of his idea, and being a learned man himself and a former confessor to Queen Isabella, he begged Columbus to



put off his journey to France until he could dispatch a letter to the Queen. The good prior wanted Spain to have the honor of the discoveries he believed Columbus would make. The Queen wrote the prior, asking that he come immediately to see her. He hurried off on the back of his mule. Juan Perez pleaded with Isabella on behalf of Columbus and at last persuaded her to hear him once more.

The Queen sent for Columbus and he reached Granada just in time to see the last King of the Moors surrender to Ferdinand and Isabella.

Men were now appointed to arrange affairs with Columbus. They were surprised to learn, however, that he expected great rewards if he succeeded. He felt that the very greatness of the service he would



Columbus stopped  
at the Convent of  
La Rabida

render the King made him worthy of honors that his sons should hold after him. He asked to be made Admiral of the little fleet, Viceroy (governor) of the lands he should discover, and receive a share (one-tenth) of the riches to be gained.

Eighteen years had passed since the idea became firmly fixed in his mind. During all this time of poverty, anxiety, suffering and disappointment, Columbus had never lost faith in the dearest wish of his life. He might seem a beggar to men who could not see his wonderful vision; but he knew in his heart that he could give an empire to Spain and would accept no terms which would spoil his hope of success.

The ministers treated his demands with scorn. Columbus left the court, sad and broken-hearted.

He still had some powerful friends left. They went to the Queen and explained how little was the cost when the gain might be so great. They reminded her that Columbus would increase not only her kingdom, but the Kingdom of God. Isabella at last came to understand the greatness of Columbus and his plan. She said, "I will undertake the enterprise and will pledge my jewels to raise the funds."

A messenger was sent to overtake Columbus. Riding slowly on his mule, Columbus was crossing a lonely mountain, when the man came up to him. At first he was unwilling to return, but when he learned that the Queen herself had given her word, he no longer doubted. Her decision interested the King, but his heart was never in it, nor his friendship for Columbus so firm as was the Queen's.

On the 17th of April, 1492, an agreement was signed, granting Columbus the title of Admiral and the rewards he had previously requested. On his part, he agreed to furnish an eighth of the expense of the expedition. His friend, Martin Alonzo Pinzon, helped him to fulfill this pledge by supplying one ship. Palos was the port selected in which the ships were to be made ready.

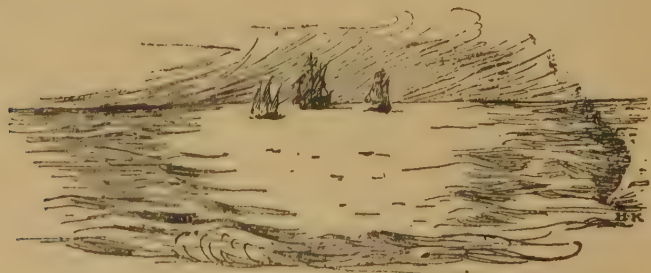
The Queen showed her good will by appointing Diego as a page to her eldest son, Prince Juan. This was not only a great honor but also provided a home for Diego while his father was away.

It seemed that Columbus was now at the end of his long and patient years of waiting. He was to try his great experiment at last. He was so sure of success that he asked and received a letter from Fer-

dinand and Isabella to the Grand Khan—the ruler of the rich provinces of Asia, which he expected to reach.

For some reason, the town of Palos owed the King the service for a year of two armed ships, called caravels. So Columbus went to Palos with an order for two ships to be ready to sail in ten days. But as soon as it was known where he intended to go, fear and doubt came over the people. The owners of ships refused their use. The boldest sailors were afraid to embark upon such an unheard of journey.

The King and Queen sent another order and then another. At length Martin and Vicente Pinzon, two brave navigators and ship-owners, agreed to sail with the expedition. Martin had already given one ship. They urged and forced men to embark. But it took over two months to get crews for the three little ships.



Into the unknown







Columbus at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella

## CHAPTER II



### FIRST VOYAGE—DISCOVERY OF AMERICA—CUBA AND HISPANIOLA—1492

**T**HE Admiral's flagship was named the *Santa Maria* and was the only one that had a deck. The *Pinta* was commanded by Martin Pinzon, and the *Nina* by his brother Vicente. There were 120 men in the fleet. The whole town came out to see them depart, few expecting that they would ever return.

After solemn religious services, the ships put out to sea on Friday, August 3, 1492, the *Santa Maria* leading the way.

With all that we know of the seas to-day and with our big ships and splendid furnishings, we cannot imagine what a sacrifice it was for those men to follow Columbus into the wilderness of waters. We have correct charts now, so that a pilot knows the paths of the sea as a boy knows the way to school. But Columbus had no chart and no pilot. Martin Behem, of Nuremberg (Germany), made him a map showing the coast of Europe on one side of the Atlantic Ocean, and for the other, he drew what he imagined might be the eastern coast of Asia. Between them, he put the Island of Cipango, as they called Japan. But Columbus was so sure he would find Asia somewhere to the westward, that he thought this a very good map.

So he set forth, happy and hopeful. The third day out, the rudder of the *Pinta* was broken. Columbus landed at the Canary Islands, thinking he would be able to buy a new ship, but was obliged to wait three long weeks while the *Pinta* was being repaired.

When they were ready for a new start, the wind died down. For three days the sails hung idle. But on Sunday morning, September 9th, a breeze came



with the sunrise and filled their sails. Columbus now launched out into the deep once more. With the last glimpse of land, his men lost heart and wept in fright and dread.

The Admiral tried in every way to encourage them. He told them wonderful stories of the lands they would



Each sailor  
began to look eagerly  
for land

find and the riches they would gain. As they sailed, the air was sweet and fresh and for many days fair winds drove them steadily onward. Now and then they caught sight of birds and drifting weeds. The hopes of the men rose and each sailor began to look eagerly about for land.

Many days went by and no land was seen. Then they were cheered by little birds that came singing in the morning and fluttered about the ships till evening. Still no land was sighted. Columbus felt

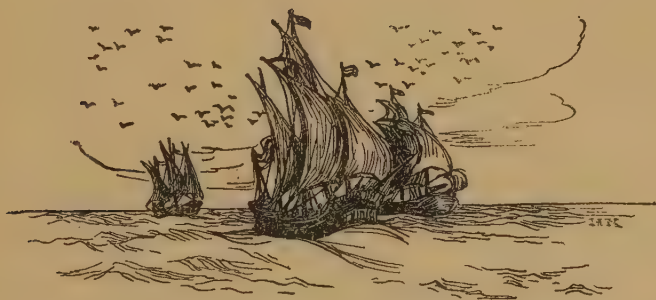
sure he must be near islands, but he did not want to leave his course to find them.

After this, they saw no more birds for some time, but came to a place where the sea was covered with floating grass and weeds. We now call it the Sargasso Sea. The men were afraid to go ahead, lest they should strike upon rocks and be wrecked. The winds that drove them onward blew steadily from east to west and they feared they could never sail back home again.

Morning after morning they saw only shoreless seas before them, and day after day they grew more anxious and restless. At last they begged the Admiral to turn back. Columbus had waited and hoped and suffered too long to think of giving up his voyage now. He knew how his men felt. He knew they might rebel. He even knew that some of them thought they ought to save their own lives by throwing him overboard and returning while it was still possible. But the Admiral kept sailing steadily westward. The same courage, patience and firmness of purpose, which marked all his life, were even now helping him to win in the very face of mutiny.

Three weeks after leaving the Canary Islands,

Martin Pinzon shouted from the *Pinta*, "LAND! LAND!" Off to the southwest, land seemed to be against the sky. Columbus fell upon his knees and the men thanked God in prayer. Columbus turned off his westward course and sailed all night toward this fancied land.



Flocks of birds gave them fresh hope

In the morning, a bitter disappointment awaited them—what they had seen was only a cloud. Before them still stretched the boundless sea. With heavy hearts, they turned again to the westward course.

After a few days, however, real signs of land became plentiful. Flocks of birds, ducks and pelicans, and fish such as are only found near shore, gave them fresh hope. Then, too, they were encouraged by see-

ing a branch with fresh berries floating toward them. Still the sun went down at evening without a sight of land.

The men began to threaten mutiny, refusing to go farther. For more than eight long weeks they sailed on what they felt was a dangerous and useless voyage. But Columbus was not afraid of their threats. He told them he would keep on until, by the blessing of God, he had succeeded in what he set out to do.

Fortunately, they soon picked up a board and a carved staff. These showed that land and people must be near. The sun went down again upon the same weary round of waters. The men sang their usual evening hymn. Columbus pointed out to them God's goodness in bringing them across the waters to a promised land. He felt sure they would see land before morning.

No one thought of sleeping that night. Columbus himself stood in the prow of the *Santa Maria*, watching. About ten o'clock, he saw a faint light far ahead. Again and again through the night they saw sudden gleams, as if some one carried a torch. At two in the morning, a gun from the *Pinta* made the



joyful announcement of "LAND AHEAD!" The sailor who first spied land was Rodrigo de Triana.

Land being now plainly seen, sails were furled and the ships drifted until dawn. Can you fancy how Columbus felt on his little ship under the stars, waiting for the break of day? He had thought and worked for this so many years. People had laughed at him; learned men had shaken their heads; enemies had opposed him. But here he was, with the land of



his dreams just in sight, its cool and fragrant air blowing over him. He wondered if it could be the famous Cipango, or some spice island in the Indian Ocean. He knew that people were living there, for he had seen the moving light.

The dawn spread slowly over sky and sea, and a low island appeared, fresh and green with trees.

Unclothed people were running in crowds to the beach. They seemed full of wonder at the strange sight. In the soft rays of the early sun, Columbus was rowed ashore. He was clad in shining armor, with a velvet cloak of brilliant scarlet. In his hand he carried the royal banner of Spain. With him were the two captains, Martin and Vicente Pinzon, each carrying a flag. The naked savages had never before seen such splendor and thought the gods had come down from the sky to visit them.

On touching land, Columbus and his followers fell upon their knees and thanked God with tears of joy for His care and favor. Then rising, the Admiral (and Viceroy) drew his sword and, waving the royal banner, took possession of the land in the name of the King and Queen of Spain. The men who had troubled him with their complaints and threats, now wept and begged his forgiveness, which he freely gave.

Columbus named the island San Salvador, which it bears to this day. It is one of the Bahama Islands.

The day when Columbus first stood upon this land of the western world was Friday, October 12, 1492. Remember this date. It is one of the golden days of

history! Between the two Fridays of his voyage were seventy days. Allowing for the three weeks' delay at the Canary Islands, it took him only forty-nine days to cross the Atlantic, which was a fast passage for such vessels.

Splendid as this success seemed to Columbus, he did not dream he had found a new continent, where, in time, God would be worshiped and men and women find peace, liberty and prosperity, where a nation would arise to become a blessing and a refuge to the oppressed people of the earth. He had unlocked new doors, through which the secrets and the bounties of nature would be learned and possessed.

The people of the world cannot measure what they owe to Columbus. Had he been discouraged by the ignorance and indifference, disappointments and hardships, jealousies and jeers, which so long delayed him; had he been faint-hearted when his men mutinied, the great prize would have escaped his grasp. He was steadfast and determined through all his trials. He had been given a great idea and had made up his mind to guard it. He would have died at his post rather than give up before his work was done.

Columbus had expected to land upon some rich Eastern coast. The great map-maker, Martin Behem, had agreed with him that the beautiful island of Cipango must lie in these waters. But here was



Columbus gave  
presents to the Indians

no gold nor jewels, silks nor spices. The soil was covered with fruits and flowers. The balmy air was full of gay birds and brilliant butterflies. The people were gentle savages, who worshiped the Spaniards as gods. They had no rich homes nor furnishings. Glad as Columbus was to see so fair and fer-



tile a land, he was puzzled that it was so different from what he had expected.

The natives at first were frightened, but Columbus gave orders they should be treated kindly. Their skins were copper-colored and their hair long, black and coarse. Their faces and bodies were well formed and painted with bright colors. Columbus was delighted to find them so gentle. He thought that, by kindness and fair treatment, they could easily be taught Christianity. They were as pleased as little children when he gave them presents of caps and beads and small bells.

Thinking this island a part of old India, Columbus called the inhabitants Indians. The name, given by mistake, has been used for all the native tribes of the New World (North and South America).

After spending the day on shore, the Spaniards went back to their ships. The next morning, the natives came swimming or paddling out to them. They brought bright-colored parrots and balls of cotton thread and other things to exchange for trinkets.

However, these painted savages and their pleasant island were not what Columbus had braved such dangers to find. So, in a day or two, having per-

suaded seven natives to go with him, he left San Salvador and sailed away to find the rich island of Cispango and the land of the Grand Khan.

Many beautiful islands were in sight. Some of their people had small ornaments of gold and Columbus was anxious to learn from where the gold came. The natives pointed toward the south and made signs which led him to hope that he was near the country of a great and wealthy king. But though he explored several islands, he found no riches. He treated the gentle Indians with great kindness and left them happy and friendly.

On one island he found the people living in pretty houses made of palm branches and wearing clothes made of cotton cloth. What interested him most was their beds, made of cotton netting hung between two posts. They were called hammocks and this was the first time civilized men ever saw them.

Never doubting that these lovely islands were the East Indian Archipelago (collection of islands), Columbus sailed southward until the natives began to tell him of a great island called Cuba. He determined to visit it. After journeying three days and nights, he came within sight of its wonderful mount-

ains, rivers and forests. The flowers were of the gayest coloring and the birds and insects glittered like jewels among the trees. It was the most beautiful place he had ever seen, in its sky and sea and land. Columbus rejoiced in the belief that this was the object of his search. He coasted around the island, looking for the city of a king. Though the native houses were better, there was nothing like a royal residence here. He wondered if this could be the land of the Grand Khan and if Cuba were the mainland and not an island.

Columbus decided to send messengers to this great king. He selected two men, one of whom knew several Asiatic languages and with them he sent two Indian guides. During their absence, Columbus was busy seeking for the spices and gold and precious stones which the islands of the East produce. He searched in vain for these costly things, but found a simple root, to which he gave little attention. It was the potato, which has come to be of more value to men than spices and jewels.

In six days, the messengers returned. Columbus was eager for a reply from the Grand Khan. But they had not found him. They had indeed come to

a village, larger and better than the rest. The people were friendly and kind, but so simple and poor that it was clear they had never before seen civilized men. There was no gold nor any spices. Had they



### The discovery of Tobacco

but known it, these messengers had seen greater riches in the fields of potatoes; of cotton, finer than any they had in Europe, and of maize or Indian corn, which was unknown in their own country. They made another discovery, too, which proved of greater wealth to Spain than the rich gold mines they sought.



They saw the Indians burning, between their lips, little rolls of dried leaves, to take away weariness. In this way, tobacco was introduced to the world.

Columbus knew that if the Spaniards settled in Cuba and cultivated the land, it would become a rich and beautiful part of the Queen's possessions. He looked forward to the time when the natives would take up the Christian religion. He selected several Indians to be taught in Spain and brought back as missionaries. But his first desire was to find the lands of Asia for which he was searching.

From the Indians, Columbus learned of an island rich in gold, lying on the east. He set sail for this, but rough seas and contrary winds drove him back. The signal to return was disobeyed by Martin Pinzon, captain of the *Pinta*, who sailed away. This desertion by his friend and companion was a sore trial to Columbus. With a sad heart, he waited some days for Pinzon, spending the time exploring the coasts of Cuba. But the *Pinta* did not return.

With the *Santa Maria* and the *Nina*, Columbus started eastward again. In the distance, he saw lofty mountains. As he approached nearer, he discovered an island even more beautiful than Cuba.

For the first time, the men found fish similar to those in Spain. The songs of the birds sounded as familiar as those in the forests at home. So like their own beloved country did this fair land seem to the homesick men, that Columbus gave it the name of Hispaniola, or Little Spain. It is now called Haiti, which is the Indian name.

They scouted along the coast for several days (early in December, 1492), but the people they saw fled at their approach. Columbus decided to land and on December 12th, he erected a cross upon a high rock at the entrance to a fine harbor.

A group of natives, hiding among the trees, watched them. The sailors managed to capture a young woman, the rest escaping. Columbus showed her the ship and gave her some presents and then put her ashore. She was much pleased at her kind treatment. The next day, he sent a band of men, with an Indian, to find the village. They came upon it in a beautiful valley, where several thousand people lived. They showed the Spaniards their homes, gave them delicious fruits to eat and anything else they had. The men returned to the ships with many gifts, thinking the country finer than the finest parts

of Spain. The people were the best looking and the most intelligent they had seen, although they were without any education whatever.

There were no signs of civilization or of wealth. In the pleasant climate and fruitful land, the natives lived like happy children. Knowing nothing of riches, they had no need of them. Their few small ornaments of gold they gave away gladly, seeing that the strangers cared for them, though Columbus ordered that something must always be given in exchange.

Several chiefs visited him, telling him of a rich place in the center of the island, called Cibao. Then the most powerful of them all sent messengers to the Admiral, with a gift and an invitation to visit his part of the island.

On the day before Christmas, Columbus set out. Before the journey was completed, however, the wind failed. The sea was calm and the Admiral went to rest. He had slept but little in all these weeks. But now the sea was still and there were no rocks and no winds to drive the ship ashore. So he gave charge to the pilot. Instead of being glad that the tired and weary Admiral could rest, this

man called a young sailor to take the helm; and the pilot, too, slept. So also did the officers on watch, forgetful of duty. The boy was drowsy. Perhaps,



A Caravel ~ after a  
drawing by  
Columbus

being Christmas eve, he was thinking about his mother and wishing he might be at home with her. Though only a boy, he could have taken good care of the ship—but he forgot to watch.



Swift tides silently carried the ship toward the shore. Then the rudder struck the bottom. The boy, now wide awake, shouted for help, and the Admiral was the first man up. Then the faithless officers hurried forward. Instead of showing their sorrow by helping with the ship, they lowered the small boats and rowed away to the *Nina*. Her captain would not let them come aboard, but hastened to the help of the *Santa Maria*. It was too late, however, to save her. He could only take the Admiral and all the men aboard his ship and wait for the day.

As soon as the chieftain heard of the trouble, he hurried to the rescue with all his people and canoes. With this help, the vessel was soon unloaded. Not the smallest thing was taken by the natives. The chief wept when he saw how sad Columbus was and offered him everything he owned. It must have been a comfort to Columbus to find such kindness in a savage, when some of his own men had been so faithless.

Columbus noticed that these Indians had more golden ornaments than any he had yet seen. Every day the chief gave him a present of gold, at last even taking off his golden crown and putting it on the

head of Columbus. The people came with trinkets and pieces of gold to exchange for anything the Spaniards gave them.

Columbus had brought a large quantity of hawks' bells with him. They were shaped like small sleigh-bells, and in Spain were used to tie onto the legs of hawks, which were trained in hunting wild birds. Nothing the Spaniards could give the Indians pleased them half so much as one little bell. They hung them around their necks and then jumped and danced to hear the tinkling music.

Seeing how Columbus valued the gold, the chieftain told him, as had others, of the place where it was found, namely, Cibao. Because the names sounded somewhat alike, Columbus hoped this place might be Cipango. But he had left Spain a long while ago and felt he must return before making further explorations.

To the men it seemed like fairyland to be in this beautiful island, where the natives were so gentle and generous. They thought of the long voyage back to Spain and the hardships there; so some asked the Admiral to let them remain in Hispaniola. This seemed to him a good plan, as the *Nina* would be

badly crowded as it was, as the *Pinta* had deserted and the *Santa Maria* was wrecked. Besides, if he should leave a colony among the friendly Indians, they could explore the island and locate the mines: they could find out about the plants and fruits and learn the language and habits of the Indians. Columbus decided to build a fort to protect them against any enemies.

For this they used the timbers of the *Santa Maria* and mounted her guns. The Indians helped with all the work. They were very happy to have some of these wonderful strangers stay with them. Columbus named the fort La Navidad (which means "The Nativity"), because on Christmas Day they had escaped from the shipwreck.

Columbus chose about forty men, though many more wanted to stay. He gave them provisions for a year, seeds to plant and articles to exchange for gold. A man was left in command who, he thought, could be trusted. Above all things, Columbus ordered them to treat the Indians kindly and fairly.

## CHAPTER III



DEPARTURE FOR SPAIN—ARRIVAL AT PALOS—BEFORE  
FERDINAND AND ISABELLA—1493

**O**N the 4th of January, 1493, Columbus was ready to sail back to Spain. He was anxious to show the Queen that she had been wise to send him. He wanted his friends to share in his success and to let those who laughed at him know that he was right. He wished to publish his splendid discovery, for well he knew he had





Columbus Sailing from Palos, Spain  
(August 3, 1492)



opened a path to new learning and wealth for Spain and the world.

A day or two before he sailed, Columbus gave the kind chieftain and his men a parting feast. The chief was sorry indeed to see the Admiral leave and assured him that he and his people would do all in their power to be helpful to the Spaniards who remained behind.

As a little lesson to the Indians and a means of protection to his men, Columbus thought it a good idea to show them how skillful the white men were in the handling of arms. So Columbus had the crews perform mock fights with swords and lances, crossbows and cannon. The Indians were astonished at the deadly power of these weapons and were terrified when the guns were discharged from the fortress, wrapping it in wreaths of smoke and shaking the forests with their report.

The parting with the little garrison was very sad. Those who stayed behind in an unknown land could not help feeling homesick as their comrades started for Spain; the others were sailing away in a ship so frail and crowded that it was doubtful if they would ever reach port. Yet all hoped for the best and

prayed for God's care over those who remained and those who went.

So much depended upon the safety of the *Nina* that Columbus was overjoyed, two days later, when he sighted the *Pinta* sailing swiftly before the wind. After seven weeks of separation, they had found each other. Although Martin Pinzon had deserted, hoping to find for himself the island of gold, Columbus was so glad to have the *Pinta* back again that he did not reprove the captain for his treachery.

An injury to the mainmast of the *Pinta* and light head winds made their progress slow. Then a gale arose and blew harder and harder until it became a hurricane. The waves tossed the little ships about, drenching them with spray and threatening to wreck them. In the darkness of the second night of this storm, Columbus saw the lights of the *Pinta* being driven farther and farther away, and in the morning no trace of her was found. Columbus almost lost hope of ever reaching home to tell his story. He thought he would never again see the *Pinta* and felt that the *Nina* could hardly ride safely through such a tempest.

But he never allowed his courage to waver. He



used all his skill and knowledge in seamanship and prayed for God's help. Columbus was a pious man and believed that God had sent him on his mission of discovery and would bring him safely home to report his success. He and his men vowed that if God answered their prayers, they would make a solemn pilgrimage to the first church they might see.

The fury of the storm raged greater. Columbus wrote a history of his discoveries, enclosed it in a cask and threw it overboard. He hoped, in case he were shipwrecked and drowned, that this history would float ashore on some land.

His little ship, however, was stronger than they dared to hope. God had heard their prayers. In a few days, they landed on one of the Azore Islands, belonging to the Portuguese. Columbus brought the ship to anchor and sent half the crew ashore to offer prayers of thanks in church. He intended to go himself with the rest, on the return of the others. But the Portuguese governor had the men taken prisoners and held them two days. He really wanted to capture the Admiral, but having failed in this, he let the prisoners go.

They were soon overtaken by another tempest and

driven to seek harbor in Portugal. It was a disappointment to Columbus not to land on Spanish soil; but he sent a messenger to tell the King and Queen of his safe return.

He could not courteously leave Portugal without sending word of his arrival to the King of that country. He was at once invited to court and received with great honor. He told all about his adventures and discoveries.

When his duty in Portugal was done, Columbus hoisted anchor and, by a safe passage, reached his home port of Palos, on Friday, March 15th, 1493. The greatest voyage in the history of the world was ended in a little more than seven months!

Such a stormy winter had never been known and the people of Palos supposed the ships had been lost. When the *Nina* entered the harbor, there were wild shouts of joy. Shops were closed and bells were rung. Every one came out to greet the travelers. Each man on the ship was regarded as a hero. What a pity that Martin Alonzo Pinzon was not there to receive his share of the honors! He had given one of the ships and had helped most of all in fitting out the expedition. Being a skillful navigator, he had been

a close companion to Columbus on his westward voyage. When the *Pinta* had been driven away by the storm on the way home, Columbus mourned it as lost. Landing in the very city which was Pinzon's home, he must have felt saddened in spite of his triumph.

During all this excitement, another ship entered the harbor unnoticed. When her commander saw the *Nina* riding at anchor and heard the rejoicing, he landed quietly and went in hiding. Yet how glad every one would have been to welcome him, for he was their own townsman, Martin Pinzon, who had brought the *Pinta* safely home!

Well Pinzon knew why he could not stand before Columbus! The storm that drove him from the *Nina* carried him to the coast of France. In the belief that the *Nina* had surely been lost, he wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella, announcing the discovery as though it were his own. When the storm was over, he sailed for Palos, expecting a wonderful welcome home and an invitation to visit the King and Queen. But he came too late. The bells were ringing for the Admiral whom he had deserted in Cuba and from whom he had tried to steal the glory of the discovery. Before long, a letter came from the Spanish sovereigns,

rebuking him and forbidding him to appear at court. Heretofore he had always been known as a man of kind feelings and honorable ambitions. It was too bad that he forgot his duty to Columbus. The letter from the King and Queen, together with the sting of his own conscience, proved fatal, for he died a few days later. Columbus never forgot how much he owed to Pinzon's help and grieved over his sad death. In every great enterprise, requiring the work of many, there is always glory enough for all.

In the meantime, the letters of Columbus had reached the King and Queen, to their great delight. They wrote him to come at once to Barcelona, where they awaited him. He set out on the long journey, taking with him the Indians and things he had brought from the islands he discovered. Country people hurried to the roadside to see them pass and, in the towns, cheering crowds filled the streets.

In Barcelona, plans were made for a great parade. The Indians (who were painted and decorated), parrots and other strange birds and beasts, plants and golden ornaments, were all displayed to the multitudes crowding the streets. Behind them rode Co-



lumbus, splendidly dressed and mounted on a fine horse, escorted by many officers in uniform.

The thrones of the King and the Queen had been placed beneath a canopy of cloth of gold. They awaited the discoverer, surrounded by noble lords and ladies. But in all that princely gathering, Co-



### Columbus and the egg

lumbus was the most stately and splendid. He was tall and straight and handsome. Years of study and patient endurance had made his face strong yet gentle. Ferdinand and Isabella received him as though he had been some royal person. When he would have knelt to kiss their hands, they rose instead to greet him and bade him be seated before them.

Columbus told the story of his voyage and showed all the things he had brought. Then, with tears of joy, the King and Queen and all the court knelt and thanked God for the great blessing of this discovery.

The news spread rapidly throughout Europe and everywhere was heard with eager interest. Honors and titles were heaped upon Columbus. He rode at the King's side and ate at the royal table. The highest nobility sought his company.

One of the good friends of Columbus was Cardinal Mendoza. His belief in Columbus had helped his cause with the King several years before. He now held the place of honor in Spain, next to the sovereigns. Rejoicing in the success of his friend, he gave Columbus a splendid banquet in his palace. One of the guests grew envious that so much honor should be shown an Italian of humble birth, and he asked Columbus if there were not men in Spain who could do what he had done. For answer, Columbus handed him an egg and asked him to make it stand on end. Of course, the man could not do it, nor could any of the other guests. Then Columbus struck it against the table and it stood easily on the broken shell. They all saw that he meant he had

broken old beliefs and done what seemed impossible. Now that he had shown the way, it would be easy for any one to follow.

The King and Queen at once began to arrange for a second voyage. There was no trouble this time to secure ships and men. Men begged to be allowed to sail with the Admiral, full of hopes of finding gold in the new lands.

Columbus  
at Genoa  
from a  
statue



## CHAPTER IV



*The fleet at anchor*

SECOND VOYAGE—ARRIVAL AT LA NAVIDAD—FOUND-  
ING THE CITY OF ISABELLA—1493-1496

**O**N the morning of the 25th of September, 1493, seventeen ships lay at anchor in the beautiful harbor of Cadiz, ready to sail with fifteen hundred people. Diego and Fernando, the two young sons of Columbus, had come to see their father depart. Both were proud of his glory. Everywhere Columbus was now looked upon with admiration and praise.



Columbus in Command of the "Santa Maria"





Men skilled in different trades, willing to help civilize the wilderness, went with him, and missionaries to teach and Christianize the Indians. Seeds and plants and farming tools were taken, to be used in cultivating the fertile fields. The first horses ever brought to the western world were on board. The first and last command of the Queen was that all should deal lovingly with the Indians. Had Columbus and Isabella been obeyed, the lives of the Indians would have continued happy and peaceful.

Full of hope, Columbus led his fleet out of the harbor and sailed straight toward the west. Calm seas and favoring winds made his voyage a pleasant one. He landed at several islands he passed on his way to Hispaniola, and reached La Navidad November 27.

All were eager to greet the little colony left in Hispaniola eleven months ago. Used as he was to cruel disappointment, Columbus was shocked to find the fort broken down and no men to be seen. The ships' guns were fired. No answer came. There was not a man left alive to tell the story of their destruction!

On the Admiral's first visit to the island, the harbor

was full of life. Indians were gliding in their canoes; some were swimming and others were in groups on the shores or under the trees. Now, not a canoe was seen nor an Indian on shore to welcome them.

A worse sorrow was in store for him. He learned from the chief, who was still his friend, that the Spaniards had disobeyed every order he had given them. They had robbed and mistreated the Indians. They had quarreled and fought among themselves and left the fort. Some had fallen ill and died. The rest had been attacked and killed by a neighboring tribe, who had broken down the fortress.

Columbus had hoped to open the way for religion and learning. He looked forward to converting the Indians to Christianity. But his hopes were wrecked by the heartlessness of his men. Instead of the happy exchange of visits and gifts, the Indians ran away in fear. Even the chief, who loved and trusted Columbus, fled from his men in terror.

The men and animals on the ships were tired and wanted to come ashore. But Columbus decided to find another place to land, since the Indians were no longer friendly. They left La Navidad and sailed

along the coast until they came to an inviting harbor, where two rivers flowed through a grassy plain and emptied into the sea. They landed and began laying out the first town built by white men in the western world. Columbus named the town Isabella, in honor of the Queen of Spain.

It was now necessary for all the men to work hard to get settled. There were some who had never done anything at home and they could not forgive the Admiral for making them do their share of work here. Dreams of riches had brought them out from Spain, but instead, they were finding hard work, sickness and scanty food. Before long, they were discouraged and began to complain. Columbus had so much work and care and was so pained over the fate of La Navidad that he himself fell ill.

Twelve of the ships were expected back in Spain with cargoes of gold and wares. Exploring parties sent out in search of gold came back encouraged, so Columbus wrote the King and Queen that he would surely soon find mines and rich cities. He could not give up the hope that Hispaniola would turn out to be Cipango. In the same letters he asked for more food and other supplies for the colony. This was

disappointing to him and to them, for they had all thought that the expense was over and that the colonies would by now have become profitable. But the King and Queen replied very kindly, granting most of his requests.

While waiting for supplies to come, Columbus had a hard time with the colony. All kinds of people were thrown together—proud nobles from the court of the King, scholars and priests, adventurers, common laborers—and all had to work alike with their hands at the hardest toil. They might have known they could not find the comforts of home in an uncivilized land. Many of them expected to find gold lying on the shore, waiting to be picked up.

Complaints grew day by day and they blamed Columbus for all their troubles. He was doing the best he could and all should have helped willingly. Finally, there was a plot to seize the ships and sail away, leaving Columbus alone. He found it out in time and punished the leaders. But this only made them more dissatisfied.

Fortunately, exploring parties sent into the mountains of the interior returned with good reports of gold in Cibao. Columbus hoped to lessen the discon-



tent of the men by locating the mines and putting some of them in a fort to work them.

Leaving the city and the ships in charge of his brother Diego—a man of great merit and wisdom, gentle and quiet and of a simple nature—Columbus set out with about four hundred men, clad in shining armor, with bright lances and cross-bows, drums and trumpets and banners. Some were on horseback. As



The search for gold

they marched or rode through the country, the Indians fled in terror. They imagined that each horse and rider was one big animal. But Columbus overcame their fears by his usual kindly manner.

When the natives heard that the Spaniards had arrived in their neighborhood, they came flocking from different parts, anxious for the little trinkets they knew the white men could give them. The Admiral

let them understand that anything would be given them in exchange for gold. One old man brought two pieces of gold and was well satisfied when he received a hawk's bell in payment.

They reached the mountains where the mines were said to be and found the sands of the rivers contained gold dust and nuggets (lumps of gold). The next thing was to find just where the mines were and to begin to work them. Columbus built a fort for the men to live in, who were to stay and do this work. The fort was called St. Thomas and the garrison was left in charge of an officer of high rank and experience, named Pedro de Margarite.

Columbus thought he could trust this man to keep order and search for the mines, while he returned to Isabella. It was too bad they were so anxious to find gold that they did not wait to make proper homes and raise enough food to live on. But Columbus, no less than Ferdinand and Isabella, desired his time should be given to exploring rather than to planting colonies. The King and Queen thought Columbus was near Asia, and that their rivals, the Portuguese, were trying to reach Asia by sailing around Africa. Each country wanted to be the first to get there.

Days and weeks passed by. Columbus was sadly needed to keep order and bring about favorable conditions in Isabella. He returned there on the 29th of March (1494) and soon after his arrival, a messenger sent by Margarite from St. Thomas came to tell him that the Indians had become unfriendly and refused to have any dealings with the Spaniards and that the chief was preparing to attack the fort.

The truth of the matter was that the moment Columbus left the fort, the Spaniards began to behave badly and angered the natives by taking their gold and mistreating them in other ways.

Columbus was little concerned about the report as, from what he had seen, he felt that the Indians were not hostile. But he sent Margarite a force of men and a supply of food and ammunition.

Soon after, the Admiral sailed away to explore the southern coast of Cuba. In the meantime, his brother Diego was to look after the discontented colony at Isabella. The year before, Columbus had visited the northern shore of Cuba. He wanted to find out whether Cuba was an island or the eastern end of Asia. He still hoped he might find here the country and city of the Grand Khan—he had not

yet delivered the letter written by his sovereigns to that monarch. He even had a faint hope that if all went well, he might be able to return to Spain by way of the Indian Ocean.

We must not forget that Columbus was only feeling his way and did not know where he was nor what he might see from day to day. He had not gone very far when the lofty blue mountains of an island to the south attracted him. Turning his ships toward it, he sailed two days and nights until he reached its shores. This was the beautiful island of Jamaica.

The natives, however, were most unfriendly and shook their lances and gave their war whoops. But the Spaniards frightened them with arrows from their cross-bows and turned a bloodhound loose among them. Then Columbus landed and took possession in the name of the King and Queen. He remained three days, but during this short stay, the Indians became friendly. Seeing no signs of gold, after following the coast for some distance, they turned back to Cuba. Columbus took with him a young Indian who, in spite of the tears of his family, begged to go with the white men.

Reaching the shores of Cuba, the ships sailed

among a large number of little islands, which Columbus named The Garden of the Queen. It was so difficult to guide the ships along these channels that, for many days, the Admiral is said to have had no sleep. The men with him grew tired of the voyage. Each day seemed to bring them no nearer the rich and civilized place they sought. The shores were beautiful and the natives friendly and generous, but that was all. The rocks damaged the ships and at last the men would go no farther on what seemed to them a useless voyage. We now know that if they had been patient a little longer and sailed two or three days more, they would have found that Cuba was an island. But Columbus had to turn back. Until he died, he never learned the truth about Cuba, but thought it the eastern end of Asia.

In all the hardships of the men, the Admiral shared equally and in addition, his was the difficult work of piloting the ships safely through the unknown waters. He now had to bear a new burden of disappointment—he was turning back without finding the rich cities of Asia or learning anything new about Cuba.

The return voyage was rough, with stormy headwinds. The long watches and heavy cares of the Ad-



miral had now begun to tell on his health, and he became very ill. A great drowsiness came over him and he lost his senses. His men thought he would die and they brought him back helpless to Isabella.

When the little fleet appeared, the friends of Columbus were much pleased. Nothing had gone right in the colony during his absence. His orders had been disobeyed; the men had quarreled with one another and treated the Indians shamefully. Their wickedness and greediness had turned the friendly natives into warring savages. The lovely island was no longer the home of peace. How this must have grieved the sick Admiral!

Margarite, instead of exploring the mountains of Cibao, as he had been ordered to do by the Admiral, spent his time idling in the Indian villages. He and his followers took provisions from the natives by force and made them give up their gold. Tidings of this conduct soon reached Diego Columbus. He wrote to Margarite, calling him to task for his actions and asking him to carry out the commands of the Admiral. Instead of seeing the error of his ways, the letter gave Margarite great offense. He came of an old family and was a favorite of the King and looked

down upon Diego's authority. He sent him a bold and insulting reply.

There was one pleasant surprise, however, in store for the Admiral. He found his brother Bartholomew, who had come from Spain, awaiting him. The sight of his brother was a great joy to Columbus. He had been the companion of his youth and had been separated from him for several years. He was a much



stronger and more vigorous type than his brother Diego. Bartholomew was fearless in spirit, prompt and active in whatever command he was given. Columbus knew he could rely on him and felt greatly relieved at his presence. During the long months that Columbus lay ill, Bartholomew took his place as governor and was in every way a help and a comfort.

Provisions were scarce, but soon four ships came

from home with food and wine, bringing also letters from the King and Queen. When these ships went back, they carried as slaves the Indians who had been taken prisoners of war. That was the custom of the times. Many of them died of homesickness. Later, when Indian prisoners were sent to Spain, the Queen felt so sorry for them that she ordered them all taken back to their homes.

While Columbus was facing troubles and wars on the island, the ship, which had brought his brother Bartholomew, was sailing back to Spain. Among her passengers were two men who might have kept the colony at peace, had they been loyal and true. One was Margarite, to whom Columbus had entrusted Fort St. Thomas; the other was a priest named Friar Buyl or Boyle. Without permission, they sailed back to Spain.

At the same time that Columbus was trying to remedy the evils resulting from the misconduct of Margarite, that base fellow and the priest were doing all they could to turn the King and Queen against the Admiral. They accused him of deceiving them by wrong descriptions of the countries he had discovered; they said that Hispaniola was an expense in-

stead of a profit and that the sufferings of the colony were due to the oppressions of Columbus and his brothers. They charged the Admiral with making the men work hard at a time when they were sick and of inflicting severe punishments on people without reason. They took care, however, to say nothing of their own conduct nor of their followers, nor of the trying conditions that existed in the new country.

The Queen had every faith in Columbus, but these men stirred up others to complain about him. At last it was decided to send a man out to learn the truth. Juan Aguado was chosen, because, on his return to Spain from Hispaniola, Columbus had written about him in the highest terms. The King and Queen thought it would please the Admiral to have this man appointed as commissioner, since he thought so well of him.

Aguado, however, was a man whose character was weakened by an increase of power or authority. He forgot the respect and gratitude due Columbus and thought only of the importance of his own commission. He lost sight of the fact that he was sent as an agent to gather information; but immediately assumed a tone of authority as though his was the right

to govern. He had people arrested, he called to account officers employed by the Admiral and paid no respect to his brother Bartholomew, who was left in charge while Columbus was away in the interior of the island.

The report spread that the downfall of Columbus and his family had come and that an agent had arrived to right the grievances of the colonists. All their ills were laid to the Admiral and Aguado listened with a ready ear.

The news of the arrival of Aguado and his actions since coming to Isabella reached Columbus and he hurried back to meet him. As every one knew the noble spirit of the Admiral, his high sense of his services and his official dignity, the people wondered whether the interview would not end in violence. Even Aguado himself expected it would be most disagreeable.

But small, mean natures cannot understand a character so fine and lofty as was the Admiral's. Instead of the expected outburst of feeling, Columbus received Aguado with much courtesy and asked that the royal letter be again proclaimed by sound of trumpet before all the people. The Admiral listened to it



with great respect and assured Aguado that he was ready to do whatever pleased his sovereigns.

Aguado continued to meddle in public affairs. The patient and respectful treatment shown him by Columbus was regarded by the people as a sign that the Admiral had lost his power and authority.

When Aguado had heard all the complaints and unjust accusations of the discontented colony and collected all the information he thought necessary to ruin the Admiral and his brothers, he returned to Spain. Columbus made up his mind to do the same. He felt it was time for him to appear at court and defend himself before the King and Queen.

Just as Columbus was ready to leave, he heard some good news. A young man named Diaz had left the colony and crossed to the southern coast, where



She told her husband the secret of rich gold mines

he married an Indian princess. They were very happy, but she was afraid he might want to return to his own people. So she decided to ask her husband to bring the Spaniards to live in her country. She showed him how beautiful and fruitful it was and then told the secret of gold mines richer than those of Cibao.

Diaz hurried away with Indian guides to tell Columbus. Messengers were sent back with him, who found the report was true. Columbus ordered the mines to be explored, and sailed away with a lighter heart. When, later, he returned from Spain, Isabella was deserted for the village of the Indian princess, where Bartholomew had built the town of Santo Domingo. It still stands, the oldest city in the New World.

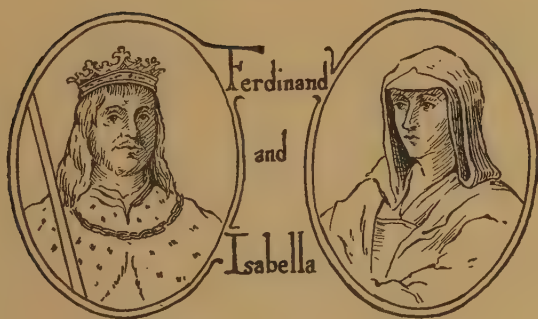
On the 10th of March, 1496, Columbus set sail for Spain, and at the same time, Aguado embarked on his return voyage. Their trip across the waters was marked by dreadful storms.





Threats of Mutiny

## CHAPTER V



THIRD VOYAGE—DISCOVERY OF TRINIDAD AND COAST  
OF SOUTH AMERICA—SENT HOME IN  
CHAINS—1496-1500

**I**N June, Columbus arrived in Spain. Soon after, he received a letter from the King and Queen, written in very kindly terms and telling him how glad they were to learn of his safe return. At court, he was received with much favor. Ferdinand and Isabella listened to his story of trouble and disappointment and felt very sorry. They did not speak to him of all the evil reports made



by his enemies. Columbus told of his voyage to Cuba and Jamaica. While he had not brought gold, he still had good reasons for thinking that there were mines on the islands.

The King and Queen believed and trusted him and promised him ships for a third voyage. Two years passed before this promise was kept. The Queen was busy with the marriages of the Prince and the Princess. But the real delay was caused by the enemies of the Admiral, who did all they could to hinder the preparations. Why should this man, who wanted only to do good, have such enemies? Some hated him because they were jealous of his success. Others, who had been in the colony, were angry because they had had to work and were disappointed in their hope of easy wealth.

Columbus bore all the meanness and annoyance of his enemies in patience and silence. At last, six ships were made ready for him. He set sail on his third voyage in May, 1498, with about two hundred men. They stopped first at the Canary Islands and from there Columbus sent three ships direct to Hispaniola to the new colony, Santo Domingo. With the other three ships he sailed southwest, in the hope,

he said, of being guided by God to something which should be to His glory and of service to the King and Queen.

A learned jeweler in Spain had told him that precious stones and metals, drugs and spices were to be found chiefly near the Equator (a great circle on the surface of the earth, dividing it into two hemispheres), where the people were dark skinned. So he directed his course this time toward the Equator.

After sailing for some days, it grew very hot. The sun beat upon the ships until the seams opened. Much of their food spoiled. The sea was as smooth as glass and not a breath of breeze cooled the men or lifted a sail. The sailors lost heart and strength, but the Admiral could not rest. He believed he could bring them out of this region of heat and calm; so, turning his ships westward, he made his way slowly to cool breezes and pleasant skies. His ships and water casks leaked so badly from the burning heat that he dared not turn southward again. He must take his men to Hispaniola as quickly as possible.

When their supply of water was almost gone, a man in the lookout saw three mountains in the dis-

tance. Sailing toward them, they found them to be on an island, which Columbus named La Trinidad (The Trinity) and that is still its name. The men landed and filled their water casks.

Sailing along the southern shore, Columbus came to a point where he could see the coast of South America. He thought it was another island until he sailed farther and met the great flow of fresh water from the Orinoco River. He reasoned that so much fresh water must flow from a great continent. He felt sure that at last he had really seen the mainland—but, of course, he thought it was Asia.

Between Trinidad and the mainland is the broad Gulf of Paria, separated from the sea on both sides by very narrow rocky channels. The Orinoco pours its waters like a flood into this gulf. A great current flows through the ocean westward from the coast of Africa and forces itself around Trinidad, flowing northward again as the Gulf Stream. The meeting of these currents in the narrow channels makes the water boil and rage with fury.

As Columbus approached the southern strait (narrow pass), he wondered how he could make the perilous trip. A mountainous wave, as if in answer to

his thought, seized his ships, driving them through into the quiet waters of the gulf. Columbus named the raging channel Boca del Sierpe (Mouth of the Serpent). Sailing north, he found a rougher passage leading out from the gulf and named it Boca del Dragon, or Mouth of the Dragon.

Hoping to find an easier way out, Columbus sailed around the shores of the gulf. The Indians were friendly and even better looking and fairer than those he had met before. The land seemed to him the most beautiful he had ever seen. When he found women wearing strings of pearls, his heart beat with joy. Surely he must now be near the long sought place of precious jewels! The women gladly exchanged their pearls for bells and bits of brass and Columbus had soon collected enough for a lovely necklace for the Queen. This shore was afterward called the Pearl Coast.

Having sailed around the gulf, Columbus found the only way out was by the Boca del Dragon. He would have been glad to stay and explore the mainland, but his ships were leaky and he had supplies on board needed in the colony. He dreaded the boiling water of the channel, but as it was the only course, he

entered boldly. The wind died down and he was in danger of being driven on the rocks. The current carried him through, however, to safe waters and, passing many beautiful islands on the way, he reached Santo Domingo without meeting with any further perils.

While guiding his ships, Columbus thought over the strange facts he had learned during his voyages. He had noticed that after sailing a certain distance westward, the needle in his compass pointed northwest instead of northeast, and the sea, the sky and the air all seemed different. Scientists have since discovered the reasons, at which Columbus could only guess. A swift current carried his ships from Trinidad northward. We now know it was the Gulf Stream. He could not understand why the water flowed so fast unless it were running down-hill. He finally came to the conclusion that the earth was shaped like a pear, instead of like an orange. He thought the highest part of it must be the continent he was leaving behind him. He even went so far as to think, since everything was so beautiful, that the Garden of Eden would be found in the center of that country.



Columbus reached Hispaniola on the 19th of August (1498), landing a considerable distance from where he had intended. It was not until the 30th of that month, however, that he arrived at the mouth of the river and met his brother Bartholomew.

Although tired out from his long journey and suffering from poor health, there was no rest awaiting the Admiral here. He had once again found the old story of disobedience to orders and cruelty to Indians. The men were sick and hungry. Though the land was fertile, they would not take time from the hunting of gold to cultivate crops. Prisoners had been sent from Spain to work in the mines and other men of evil nature and habits had come to seek their fortunes. Those whom Columbus had left as counselors to his brother had become envious of him and stirred up rebellion among the people. Fully half the colony was in revolt against Bartholomew. Wars had spread with the Indians. Sin, despair and death seemed to surround this fair land, which Columbus hoped he had found for the glory of God.

Instead of being free to use his time and ships in the service of the King and Queen, he had to spend more than two years trying to bring order and peace

to the colony. Reports of these troubles were carried to Spain and eagerly spread by the enemies of Columbus. He wrote his story frankly and truthfully to the sovereigns, but his enemies only cried out the more against him.

Ferdinand and Isabella had given Columbus great authority and he had served them faithfully and well. But they began to fear there might be some cause for the complaints against him and decided to send a man to take his place.

A little while before, Columbus had asked that he might have the company of his son, Diego. You remember that he had been left at court as a page. Later, his younger brother Fernando had also been made a page. Now Diego was grown to manhood and his father needed him. So, one day, (late in August, 1500) when two caravels came into the harbor, it was hoped that Diego had arrived. Instead, however, the ship brought a man—Francisco de Bobadilla—whom the King and Queen had sent to replace Columbus, without any notice to the Admiral.

Bobadilla had been told to treat the Admiral with respect. Instead, he seized the house and property of Columbus, who, at that time, happened to be away

in the mountains. He sent him copies of the royal letters and an order to appear at once before him.

Columbus could not believe that the King and Queen had treated him with such undeserved cruelty. He obeyed the summons and was arrested. He and his two brothers were put in chains. At first there was no one willing to put the fetters upon this great man, but at last a cook from his own household fastened the rivets.

The Admiral did not know of what he was accused, nor what was to be his fate. All those who were discontented and jealous of his honors, filled the ears of Bobadilla with complaints against their leader. The same evil spirit which had turned against him the hearts of Ferdinand and Isabella, now made a long list of unjust and untrue accusations. Columbus suffered all this cruelty without a word. He supposed he would be put to death and was glad when he found he was to be sent to Spain, even though loaded with chains.

In October, 1500—just eight years after Columbus had first landed in the New World, in splendid dress and with sword and royal banner—he was taken aboard ship bound like a culprit, the mob hooting and

jeering at him. On the ship he was treated with gentle courtesy by those in command. They even wanted to remove his chains. But his proud and noble spirit would not permit any one but the King to do this, since he had allowed them to be put upon him. He said he would always keep these chains as a token of the reward of his services and directed that they should be buried with him.

But his enemies had gone too far. Columbus had discovered a new world and new facts for science. He had dared more than any before him. When he arrived in the harbor of Cadiz a chained prisoner, people everywhere expressed great anger and sorrow at such treatment. He was one of the world's heroes. Even those who had complained about him were now strongly in sympathy with him.

As soon as the sovereigns heard how Bobadilla had used the authority they gave him, they sent orders that Columbus should be set free and treated like an Admiral and Viceroy. They also commanded that his brothers be freed.

Not waiting for the accusations from Bobadilla, they sent Columbus money to come to court. Escorted by friends and richly dressed, Columbus ar-

rived and was received with honor. The Queen wept when she saw him. Columbus had endured quietly the insults and wrongs of wicked men, but



The Queen wept when  
she saw him

seeing the sympathy of the Queen, he fell on his knees with tears and sobs.

The King and Queen heard his story kindly and assured him that his property would be given back to



him, Bobadilla ordered home, and he replaced in his command. Columbus cared for his position in the colonies above everything else. But he never went back as governor. Columbus had had trouble from the beginning to govern the colony. It was no fault of his, for the conditions were hard and the men lawless. Later governors, for many years, did not succeed even as well as he. Probably the King was sorry he had agreed to let Columbus have one-tenth of the profits and be Viceroy of the lands he should discover, for by this time it began to appear that the New World was too rich and great for one man to govern.

About the time Columbus discovered South America in 1498, Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese, had succeeded in sailing around the Cape of Good Hope to India. The year before, John Cabot had planted the flag of England on the coast of North America, which he had explored south from Newfoundland, and Vicente Pinzon, (who had commanded the *Nina*) in 1500 discovered Brazil and the Amazon River in South America. The vast extent of the western world was now being understood, although

everybody thought these shores were the eastern parts of Asia and Africa.

In view of all this, King Ferdinand was glad of an excuse to keep Columbus in Spain for awhile. He told him to wait two years, until new officials had brought order to the colony. The new governor, Nicolas de Ovando (appointed in place of Bobadilla), set out with a great fleet of thirty ships and twenty-five hundred people. For the first time, married men took their families to settle in the New World. Ovando was instructed to find out at once how much was due Columbus and to send it to him.

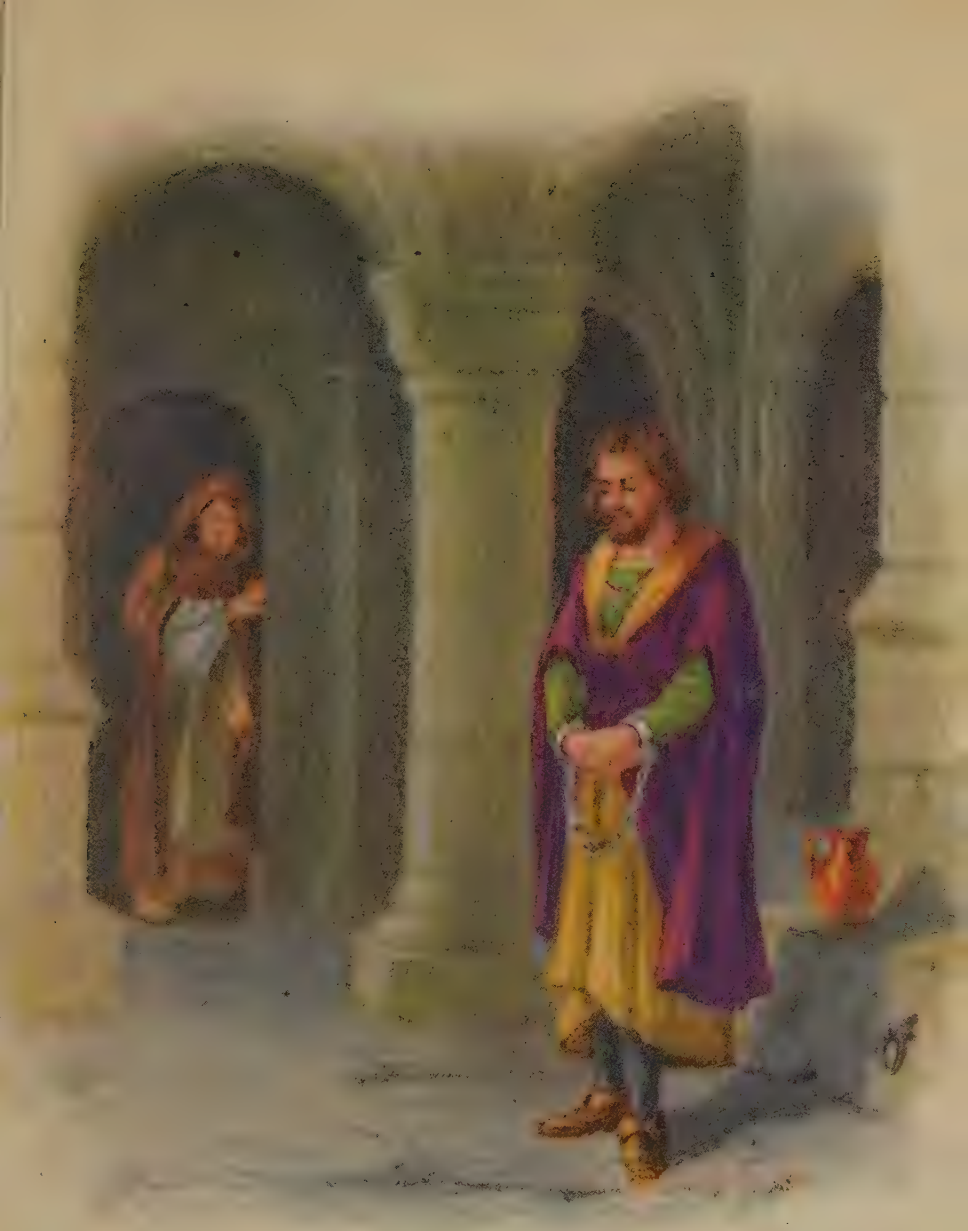
While patiently waiting in Spain, Columbus was busy studying new plans of discovery. The Portuguese had reached India and returned with richly laden ships. He could not understand why he had not been able to do the same. He was sure his islands were near India. He came to the conclusion that there must be a strait somewhere among these islands, leading from the Atlantic into the Indian Ocean.

## CHAPTER VI



FOURTH VOYAGE—SHIPWRECKED AT JAMAICA—CLOSING YEARS AND DEATH—1502-1506

**C**OLUMBUS asked the King and Queen to furnish him with ships to go in search of this passage. They listened to him and gladly fitted out four ships for him. On this voyage he decided to have the company of his son, Fernando, now fourteen years old and from whom he had been separated nearly all his life. (Fernando later wrote the history of his father's life.) Diego remained at home to look after his father's af-



Columbus in Chains





fairs, for Columbus felt he had no one else in Spain to whom he could entrust them.

Before setting out on his fourth and last voyage, Columbus sent to Genoa (where they are still kept) copies of the letters signed by the King and Queen of Spain, granting money and titles to him and to his family. He had suffered so much from his enemies in Spain that he put his own fame and the rights of his family under the protection of his native city.

In May, 1502, he was all ready for his voyage and found the wind and seas so fair that it took him but a month to be back once more among his islands. He had been directed not to visit the colony. One of his ships, however, needed repairs and he decided to stop and exchange it for one of Ovando's fleet.

Ovando refused. Neither would he allow Columbus to enter the harbor to avoid a storm. He saw no signs of a tempest and thought the plea was an excuse. He did not know the conditions of the weather as did the Admiral. Ovando had a fleet ready to return to Spain with the best cargo yet sent home. The cruelty of Bobadilla and of the men who had rebelled against Columbus had wrung from the poor Indians all the gold they could find. These men were going

home with their money. On the frailest ship of the fleet were the four thousand pieces of gold due the Admiral.

The sky and sea were so still that no one listened when Columbus sent a message begging Ovando to hold the fleet until after the storm. Eighteen ships put out to sea. In two days, a furious hurricane sent fourteen to the bottom. Bobadilla and others who had wronged Columbus were lost with all their treasure. Three ships, sadly broken, limped back to San Domingo. But the weakest ship of all outsailed the storm and reached Spain in safety. It carried the property of the Admiral and every one thought this a sign of God's care of him.

Meanwhile, Columbus, denied the shelter of the harbor, met the storm outside. His four ships were scattered and for many days and nights were beaten by the winds and waves and drenched with torrents of rain. But all lived through the tempest and were brought together again.

For over two months, Columbus struggled with the worst storms he had ever known. He had been through many an angry gale in his voyages on the seas, but none so violent as these. In spite of winds

and currents which carried him out of his course, he beat his way southwestward.

At a small island, he came upon a big canoe. It was eight feet wide and nearly a hundred feet long, hewed out of the trunk of a single mahogany tree. Seventy-five strong Indians paddled this canoe. A cabin of palm branches in the center sheltered a chief and his family, who had come from the mainland with a fine cargo to trade with the islanders. Columbus found they had things made of copper and knew they must come from a country richer than any he had yet seen. They told him to sail westward and if he had done so, he would have found the rich mines of Mexico and made other wonderful discoveries. But he would not be turned from his purpose of finding the strait and headed his ships toward the south.

He touched the mainland at Cape Honduras. For six weeks, he sailed along the coast eastward, hindered by winds and currents, till (September 12, 1502) he rounded a cape (a strip of land that extends into the sea) and turned southward. He called the cape Gracias-à-Dios, (which means "Thanks to God") for, from this place, the winds and currents helped him.

As he advanced, Columbus found the natives wearing ornaments of pure gold and of great size and value. At a place called Veragua, he was told he would find quantities of gold if he would travel inland. Had he listened, he would have done well, for Veragua is on the Isthmus of Panama and a short journey would have brought him to the Pacific Ocean. But as we know, when Columbus had set himself a task, he let nothing turn him from it. He was looking for a strait to the Indian Ocean and sailed on and on, without stopping even for gold. He sailed a long way eastward along the north coast of South America. Had he continued, he would have come to the Mouth of the Dragon and the Pearl Coast, which he had visited on his third voyage.

But few of his men felt as he did about finding this passage. They were pale and worn out with fright and hard work caused by the terrific storms, during one of which a ship and her crew were lost. The ships were battered and worm-eaten and the Admiral was ill and weary. At last he sadly felt he must give up the object of his voyage and turn back without finding the strait. Yet he was right in thinking there should be an opening toward the west. If he

could sail those seas now, he would find that the patience and skill of men had broken down the narrow barrier between the two oceans. After more than four hundred years, the Panama Canal fulfills the dream of Columbus.

The men were very glad to turn back to hunt for gold in Veragua, though it took a month of battling with storms to reach it. When they arrived, Columbus decided to leave a colony with his brother Bartholomew in command. The Indians made strong objections to this and, after a few weeks, the Admiral had to rescue the colony and sail away, though there was every promise of gold. One ship was lost and another was left behind, because it was too worm-eaten and battered to travel.

This voyage had occupied about a year and had brought little result. But the news of the rich shores he had found would be welcome, Columbus well knew, and he was anxious to reach Hispaniola with this report.

But waterspouts and gales made the voyage one of terror and dread. For days, the ships were blown and tossed about on the angry waters. They lost their anchors. The ships leaked so that the men kept



them afloat only by using their pumps and every pail and kettle.

At last they reached Jamaica, where they had to run the ships aground because they could sail no farther. The Indians were kind and sold food to them.



Diego Mendez dared the attempt.

The only hope of getting away was to send a message to Ovando at Hispaniola. The messenger would have to sail in a canoe, cutting through two hundred miles of rough seas.

Diego Mendez was the brave man who dared the attempt. One other Spaniard and six Indians accompanied him. They were captured by Indians

and only Mendez escaped and alone made his way back to Columbus. Two canoes were then fitted out, with six Spaniards and ten Indians in each, and with these Mendez at last reached Hispaniola. He hurried to Ovando to ask for a ship to rescue the Admiral. After all he had endured, Mendez thought the governor would give Columbus immediate help.

But it made no difference to Ovando that Columbus had been shipwrecked. He secretly feared he might take his place as governor, and cared little what fate befell the Admiral. On one excuse after another, he detained the faithful Mendez, who fretted at the delay in bringing help to his master.

In the meantime, the Admiral and his men passed the weary months living in little cabins built on the ships. They did not know whether Mendez had ever reached San Domingo. They were sick and hungry and as they had nothing to do, they brooded over their troubles. From day to day, they would look out across the water, hoping for a ship to come for them. The Admiral, whose body was tortured by suffering because of ill health and advancing years, kept to his bed most of the time.

To add to the sick man's trials, a rebellion broke

out (January, 1504) among his men, under the leadership of Francisco de Porras. Columbus stumbled from his bed and tried to quiet them; but the mutiny had gone too far. The men took ten canoes and left the Admiral with only a few friends. They did not succeed in getting away from the island, for the seas were too rough and the canoes too heavily loaded. They wandered from village to village, robbing and mistreating the Indians. This lawless band made the natives so bitter that they would not sell food to any of the white men. Columbus and his friends were in danger of starving.

Trying to think of a way to win back the Indians, Columbus remembered there was soon to be an eclipse of the moon (when the moon is hidden in darkness). He sent for all the chiefs and told them that his God was angry with them for refusing him food and meant to punish them. As a sign of God's anger, Columbus told them the moon would lose its light that very night.

When the moon grew dark, the savages were terribly frightened and began to tremble at the punishment which they now felt awaited them. They made all haste to bring food to the ships and begged Colum-

bus to ask his God to spare them. From that time on, the shipwrecked men were never in want of provisions.

Months passed and even the few men left with the



The Savages were terribly frightened.

Admiral decided to take to the sea in canoes. They were in such misery and so hopeless that they would rather risk drowning than living where they were.

To them it seemed that only death faced their stay there.

Just as this second mutiny was about to break out, a sail was seen. Can you picture the delight of the men at the thought that they would now be taken off the island? The commander sent ashore a keg of wine and some bacon and a letter from Ovando, expressing his sorrow that the Admiral was having so much trouble, and regretting that he had no large ship in port to send for them. Then he spread his sails and headed back for San Domingo.

How cruel this was! The only cheering thing about it was the proof, after waiting for eight months, that their messengers had reached Hispaniola safely. They believed that Mendez would do all he could to rescue them. With this idea in mind, the Admiral sent messengers to the rebel Porras, asking him to bring back his followers and be ready to go when ships should come for them.

Porras had so bad a heart that he could not believe the Admiral was sincere, even though he had sent the rebels half the wine and bacon. He and his men attacked the brother and friends of the Admiral, but Porras was taken prisoner and several of his men



were killed. The rest came back and the Admiral generously forgave their desertion.

It was four months more before relief came. Columbus had spent a bitter year waiting. Diego Mendez at last bought and fitted out a ship, though hindered in every way by Ovando. But the cruelty of this governor went too far and the people became angry at his neglect of the Admiral. Finding that Mendez was ready to send a ship, Ovando ordered a caravel (ship) to accompany it. Columbus and his family never forgot the faithfulness of Diego Mendez, who was rewarded by the King for his bravery and loyalty.

The happy day of deliverance came and Columbus gladly took all his countrymen out of this lonely place. At the end of June (1504) they headed for San Domingo and after seven weeks of struggling with contrary winds, they reached the harbor August 13. The people welcomed them with shouts of joy. Ovando received Columbus with his son and brother as guests in his own home. He was very polite, but Columbus could not trust a man who had treated him so badly.

Most of the men who had been with Columbus

were in great want and he gave them all the money he could spare. As soon as he could do so, he got two ships, and in a month was ready for his homeward voyage. They had just started, when a sudden storm carried away the mast of one ship. The Admiral sent back this boat and went on with the other. Tempests tossed them for weeks, until at length, on the 7th of November, the battered ship anchored in the port of San Lucar (Spain). His fourth and last voyage of discovery was over, with its story of constant storms and troubles, shipwreck and failure. His health and strength were gone.

When Columbus arrived at Seville (soon after his return), he found all his affairs in confusion. From the time he had been sent home in chains from San Domingo, his rents and dues had never been properly collected; and such as had been collected, had not been turned over by Ovando. He begged that a letter be written by the King, commanding that payment be made of this money, so long overdue. All that Columbus had been able to collect of his money in Hispaniola had been spent in bringing home many of the crew on his last voyage.

In one of his letters to his son Diego, who was at

court, the Admiral wrote: "I receive nothing of the revenue due me. I live by borrowing. Little have I profited," he added, "by twenty years of service, with such toils and perils, since at present I do not own a roof in Spain. If I desire to eat or sleep, I have no resort but an inn, and, for the most times, have not the money to pay my bill."

In the midst of his personal sufferings, he was more anxious for the payment of his seamen than of himself. He wrote strongly and repeatedly to the King, urging him to pay what was owing them and requested his son Diego to do all in his power in their behalf. "They are poor," wrote Columbus, "and it is now nearly three years since they left their homes. They have endured great hardships, they bring invaluable tidings, for which their Majesties ought to give thanks to God and rejoice."

To add to his sorrow, his good friend, Queen Isabella, died a few days after his return to Spain. This was, indeed, a great misfortune to Columbus, for, with the influence of the Queen gone, the King treated him with ingratitude and neglect. A year and a half Columbus begged in vain for justice.

The cares and troubles of the great man were drawing to a close. His last voyage had shattered his health beyond all hope of recovery. The cold ingratitude of Ferdinand chilled his heart. In great poverty and suffering, Christopher Columbus died on the 20th of May, 1506, in the Spanish city of Valladolid. The same calm faith and earnest piety, which had been so marked during his life, were with him to the end. As if trying to atone for the injustice done him, the King had Columbus buried with solemn ceremonies.

The next year, 1507, by a strange chance, the land Columbus discovered was named after another—Amerigo Vespucci (ves-poosh'e). He was a friend of Columbus and having made several western voyages, published a description of the coast of Brazil. A German geographer read this account and made a map according to the description and named it Americus Land. No one had given the new continent a name and this one came to be used for the whole western world. Perhaps this incident shows the power of printing, which was then so new an art—Vespucci's printed account traveled to Germany and the name Americus Land printed on his maps by

the German geographer was read by navigators all over Europe.

Columbus was buried in Seville. He had asked to be laid at rest in Hispaniola; so his sons later brought his body to San Domingo and placed it in the cathedral there.

In 1795, as the result of a war between France and Spain, San Domingo passed into the hands of the French. The Spaniards, with splendid ceremonies and military honors, removed the leaden box, believed to contain the remains of the great Admiral, to the cathedral of Havana in Cuba (January, 1796).

After the Spanish-American war in 1898, which broke the last hold of Spain upon the world Columbus gave her, this casket was carried to Spanish soil and buried in Seville.

Columbus had wished his body to be at rest in Hispaniola. In 1875, the cathedral at San Domingo was repaired and a casket found which, from its inscription, many believe to be that of the discoverer, and the other, resting in Seville, to be that of his son. Perhaps fate has granted his last request. In any event, the old and the new worlds which he united both claim his dust and share his fame.



The life of Columbus ended sadly. His years had been spent in long waiting and bitter disappointments; in perils of the sea and of enemies; in weariness and lonely watchings. His bright hopes had been spoiled by evil and jealous men. He had found few to trust.

But these hard years had been given to noble enterprise. His spirit had been patient and generous in all his sufferings. His great mind had thought out the way to a new world and added vast stores to human knowledge.

Though he was grieved by Ferdinand's injustice and deprived of his dues, he was really too great for the rewards of any king or any time. While he did not know it, he had led the way, not to the old countries of the East, but to a fair new continent. He served not alone the King and Queen of Spain, but all men, for he revealed the secret of world navigation by which men have conquered the earth.







